

Annual Report for the Year 1905.

For the Urban Sanitary District of Downham Market.

POPULATION (Census 1901) 2473.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Third Annual Report of the Sanitary condition, and of the work done during the past year in this District.

The area of the Downham Urban District is 853 acres, the formation being compact and more or less semi-circular in outline, bounded on the west by the St. John's Eau river, the surface here being little above fen level, rising gradually and evenly towards the east, hence favourably adapted for natural drainage. The District is not large enough nor does it well admit of subdivisions into "localities" for the purpose of sanitary statistics.

I have this year estimated the Population, as a basis of calculating the various rates, at 2,500.

Birth Rate During the year there were 56 births, an increase of 6 upon the previous year, and about the average number for the District for the last 10 years. Thirty-two of these were boys and 24 girls. Illegitimate births are not distinguished in the registrar's returns.

Death Rate The total number of deaths registered was only 40, the smallest number for the past 10 years, and 23 less than in 1904, chiefly accounted for by the high death rate of that year, and the absence of epidemic disease. Eighteen of these 40 deaths occurred in the Workhouse Infirmary, mostly of quite old persons. Only 24 deaths were of residents in the District, giving the exceptionally low death-rate of 9·6; the average for the last 10 years being 16·6.

Infant Mortality Four infants died under 1 year of age, 2 of these as the result of premature birth. The death-rate here appears at 71·4 per 1,000 births registered less than half that of 1904, which was 180.

A new table of statistics of Infantile Mortality has been instituted by the Local Government Board; the number of infant deaths this year being so small, I have thought it unnecessary to have this table printed in the body of my report.

Infectious Diseases During January the District was visited by a severe epidemic of Influenza, which was more or less prevalent all over the country at that time; several of the cases were followed by pneumonia, but no death was registered from this cause; the epidemic had abated by the middle of February. There

were only 5 cases of notifiable disease during the year, 3 of Scarlet Fever, all of a mild nature, the measures of isolation and disinfection being evidently successful. One case of Erysipelas and one of Enteric Fever, a mild form, contracted during the summer months, probably by bathing in the highly polluted St. John's Eau river; this is a dangerous practice largely indulged in by the youths of the District, and likely to be followed by disease; the stream carries the whole of the town sewage and I would recommend the Council to take steps to prevent bathing here. During the latter part of the year there were several cases of Mumps among the children; but there was no outbreak of disease rendering closure of the schools necessary during the year.

Among cases of deaths may be classified—

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Cancer, 4 | All of persons belonging to the District. |
| Pulmonary Phthisis, 3 | |
| Heart Disease, 3 | |
| Senile Decay, 3 | |

Water Supply

This has been sufficient and good throughout the year; the water from the public wells has been examined on several occasions and found uniformly free from organic pollution. That from the Cock Yard pump on Lynn Road has been purer than usual but requires to be tested from time to time.

Drainage

During the first half of the past year the Council will remember that much discussion took place concerning the contamination of a private pond by one of the town sewers; this pond remains in the course of the sewer and hence is railed off and unused. These open sewers, though usually inoffensive and harmless are always liable to give rise to trouble where they run in the neighbourhood of houses or through fields used for the grazing of cows; and I would recommend your Council to adopt a system of piping them as opportunity arises. They have been kept better cleansed during the past year, and the Surveyor has received more direct instructions from your Council concerning them.

Deposit of Refuse

An unusually large number of offensive ash-pits have occupied the attention of your Inspector. If the Council would take steps to inaugurate a system for the compulsory removal of refuse much benefit would accrue.

Factory and Work-
shop Act

In a small agricultural town the administration of the Factory and Workshops Act 1901, does not afford much to report. There are 27 Workshops on the register, which have been periodically inspected; also 10 Bakehouses and 6 Dwellings where home-work is carried on. One case of overcrowding was remedied by your Inspector. The terms of the Act have been complied with, there has been no prosecution necessary, and home-work has not been suspended in any case.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during Year 1905.

| NOTIFIABLE DISEASE. | At all Ages. | CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT. | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------|---------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | At Ages—Years. | | | | | |
| | | Under 1 | 1 to 5 | 5 to 15 | 15 to 25 | 25 to 55 | 65 and upwards |
| Small pox... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Cholera ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Diphtheria ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Membranous croup ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Erysipelas... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Scarlet fever ... | ... | 3 | ... | 1 | 2 | ... | ... |
| Typhus fever ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Enteric fever ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... |
| Relapsing fever ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Continued fever ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Puerperal fever ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Plague ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Totals ... | ... | 5 | ... | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | ... |

Causes of, and Ages at, Death during Year 1905.

| CAUSES OF DEATH | Deaths in or belonging to whole District at subjoined ages. | | | | | | | Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District. (Workhouse) 16 |
|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---|
| | All Ages | Under 1 year | 1 and under 5. | 5 and under 15. | 15 and under 25 | 25 and under 65 | 65 and up- wards | |
| | 1 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | |
| Other Septic diseases... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis) ... | 3 | ... | ... | 1 | ... | 2 | ... | 2 |
| Other tubercular diseases ... | 2 | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Cancer, malignant disease ... | 4 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 1 | ... |
| Bronchitis ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Pleurisy ... | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Premature birth ... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Heart diseases... | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Cerebral Hemorrhage... | 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 2 |
| Senile decay ... | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 8 |
| Brights disease ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| All other causes ... | 4 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 3 | ... | ... |
| All causes ... | ... | 24 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 10 | 18 |

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1905 and previous years.

| Year. 1 | Population estimated to middle of each year. 2 | Births. | | Total Deaths registered in the District. | | | | Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District. 9 | Deaths of Non-resident registered in Public Institutions in the District. 10 | Deaths of Residents regis- tered in Public Institu- tions beyond the District. 11 | Nett Deaths at all ages belong- ing to the District. | |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------|------------|---|---|-------------------|------------|---|---|--|---|------------|
| | | Number. 3 | Rate. 4 | under 1 year 5 | Rate per 1000 Births registered. 6 | At all Ages. 7 | Rate. 8 | | | | Number. 12 | Rate 13 |
| 1895 | 2593 | 60 | 23·1 | 19 | 233 | 65 | 25·0 | 17 | 14 | 1 | 52 | 20·0 |
| 1896 | 2603 | 75 | 28·8 | 9 | 120 | 56 | 21·5 | 11 | 8 | 1 | 49 | 18·8 |
| 1897 | 2636 | 70 | 26·5 | 13 | 185 | 60 | 22·7 | 15 | 15 | ... | 45 | 17·0 |
| 1898 | 2667 | 47 | 17·6 | 6 | 127 | 56 | 20·9 | 14 | 9 | 1 | 48 | 17·9 |
| 1899 | 2670 | 52 | 19·4 | 9 | 173 | 50 | 18·7 | 12 | 14 | ... | 36 | 13·4 |
| 1900 | 2670 | 53 | 19·10 | 9 | 169 | 48 | 17·9 | 13 | 10 | ... | 38 | 14·2 |
| 1901 | 2472 | 44 | 17·0 | 4 | 100 | 43 | 17·3 | 8 | 5 | ... | 38 | 15·3 |
| 1902 | 2473 | 61 | 24·6 | 5 | 81 | 60 | 24·2 | 15 | 12 | ... | 48 | 19·4 |
| 1903 | 2486 | 57 | 22·9 | 4 | 70 | 44 | 17·6 | 17 | 16 | ... | 28 | 11·2 |
| 1904 | 2488 | 50 | 20·09 | 9 | 180 | 63 | 25·3 | 20 | 15 | ... | 48 | 19·2 |
| Averages for years 1905-04 | 2575·8 | 56·9 | 22·78 | 8·2 | 143·7 | 54·5 | 21·0 | 14·2 | 11·8 | ·3 | 43 | 16·6 |
| 1905 | 2500 | 56 | 24·4 | 4 | 71·4 | 40 | 16 | 18 | 16 | ... | 24 | 9·6 |

Sanitary Work

The following is a summary of some of the work carried out by your Inspector during the past year.

Workshops and Factories

10 Slaughter Houses

6 Dairies and Cowsheds

10 Bake Offices

6 Houses of Out Workers

Disinfection of 4 Private Houses

17 defective Closets remedied

59 Nuisances by Stable Manure attended to

46 Ash-pits emptied

16 Defective Drains remedied

15 New Traps caused to be provided

11 dirty Pigstyes attended to

Pigs kept within prescribed distance, 4 cases, etc., etc.

} have been periodically inspected.

The services of a Trained Nurse were procured for the District early in the year, and her work has undoubtedly been to the advantage of the health of the town. It is more than possible that to her is largely due the much diminished Infantile Mortality, upon which the District may be congratulated. If she can teach the mothers in the poorer homes not to feed their young infants upon "bread sop" she may be the means of saving much infant suffering.

The importance of teaching the elements of Hygiene in the Schools cannot be over-estimated, for where so much ignorance is the cause of disease and faulty development, Education is the only means of improvement.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

E. GARNEYS WALES,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman and Members of
The Downham Urban District Council.

February 1st, 1906.

